



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20420

DIVERSITY@Work

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MAKING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY A REALITY

Armando E. Rodriguez, Deputy Assistant Secretary for DM&EEO

Welcome to the first issue of *Diversity@Work*. It's an exciting time to be working in diversity management. As VA Secretary Anthony Principi reminded us in a recent VA broadcast, we're all responsible for making sure that equal employment opportunity is not just a slogan at VA; it must be a reality.

It is my hope that VA management and staff gain greater knowledge of their responsibilities and the assistance available to ensure opportunity in our diverse workplace. To do so, we must identify, understand, and use the tools available to help us meet that goal.

My office works proactively to enhance the employment of women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities through two main areas:

Workforce Analysis, and Complaints Prevention and Special Initiatives. Some of the tools we provide to you include assistance with workforce analysis and planning, special emphasis programs, training and education, and internship programs, among numerous others.



Enjoy our newsletter, share it with staff and colleagues, and give us your feedback. Be sure to contact us—see page 4—we're here to serve you.

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CELEBRATE!

National American Indian Heritage Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating National American Indian Heritage Month during November.

It's important to recognize the contributions that Native Americans have made to our country, especially in service to our military. Nearly 30 have received the Medal of Honor, the United

States' highest military award for combat valor. To learn more about the 20th century medal recipients, go to history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-3.htm.

For information on VA's National Native American Special Emphasis Program, contact José Marrero at (202) 273-5839.

Bookmarks

- National Congress of American Indians
<http://ncai.org>
- Blacks in Government
www.bignet.org
- Federally Employed Women, www.few.org
- Federal Asian Pacific American Confederation
www.fapac.org
- Hispanic Employment Program Managers
www.hepm.org
- Office of Disability Employment Policy
www.dol.gov/dol/odep

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use



SPECIAL EVENTS. VA sponsors numerous national events that honor and support veterans. Here's a sampling of events scheduled for 2002.

- * 16th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (see story on next page), hosted by the Grand Junction, Colorado, VAMC; April 7-12.

- * 22nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games, hosted by the Louis Stokes VAMC, Cleveland; July 9-13.

- * 16th National Veterans Golden Age Games, hosted by the Greater Los Angeles VA Health Care System; August 11-17.

For more information, contact Kim Byers, VHA Special Events Coordinator, at (734) 761-7824.

DIVERSITY AWARD WINNERS. The New Jersey Healthcare System captured first place in this year's VHA Under Secretary's Diversity Awards. The group was selected for its use of coaching and mentoring programs to

promote diversity. An honorable mention went to the Atlanta VAMC, while Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 8 and the Chief Information Office at VA Headquarters received special recognition awards.

Established in 1993 by the Under Secretary for Health's Diversity Advisory Board, this award program recognizes facilities that have advanced diversity in the workplace and provided a positive role model for other facilities. Any VHA facility, VISN, or VHA Headquarters program office that has developed initiatives to increase awareness and improve diversity within their organization is eligible to compete for this award. Winners receive a trophy and a monetary award to be used for diversity education and training.

For more information on this awards program, visit <http://vaww.diversity.med.va.gov/directives.htm>.



SPOTLIGHT

White House Executive Order 13021: Tribal Colleges and Universities

Former President Clinton signed Executive Order 13021 in 1996 to help ensure that tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) are more fully recognized as accredited institutions and have better access to Federal resources.

The Order calls for the promotion, preservation, and revitalization of American Indian and Alaskan Native languages and traditions, and it encourages innovative approaches to better link TCUs with early childhood,

elementary, and secondary education programs.

VA fully supports this Order through programs designed to increase the participation of TCUs in VA-sponsored initiatives. One such program is the Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS), administered through American University in Washington, DC. For more information on this program, visit www.american.edu/wins.

For More Info

To learn more about Executive Orders, go to www.va.gov/dmeeo and click on the White House Initiatives link.

INSIDE STORY

Are You Ready for Workforce Analysis?

According to the draft *VA Workforce Planning and Succession Plan*, "The Department of Veterans Affairs, like many other Federal agencies, is facing a major crisis over the next several years as a result of the tremendous number of employees eligible to retire between now and 2005. The potential for a massive wave of retirements, coupled with the inability to hire new employees to fill mission-critical positions on a timely basis at competitive salary levels, will severely impact and diminish VA's capability to deliver service to veterans."

Mike Dole, DM&EEO's Director of Workforce Services, says that filling the vacancies left by these retirements will be our best opportunity to ensure that the VA workforce resembles the face of

America and the veterans we serve. He adds, "We will have the opportunity to eliminate underrepresentation in specific occupations and grades and position our workforce to respond to the new century. We just have to have the right targeted recruitment."

To help develop the necessary targeted recruitment, DM&EEO is slated to publish *A Guide: Conducting Workforce Analysis*. This booklet walks you through workforce analysis and succession planning, illustrating how to analyze the data and pull it into a coherent plan. To support the effort, DM&EEO is also developing a series of computer-generated workforce data summaries that enable you to produce and download custom reports for your facility. For more information, e-mail Michael.Dole@mail.va.gov.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS

Grand Junction, Colorado, VAMC: National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic



Diversity@Work recently spoke with Ron Fulk, EEO Manager of the Grand Junction VAMC, about the importance of workplace diversity. The Medical Center, which this year became the first VA facility to re-

ceive the Office of Personnel Management's 2001 Presidential Award for Quality, has a relatively small staff of 306 employees, so managing diversity can be a challenge. But Fulk says, "One of our biggest boosters is our Director." And that makes all the difference, he adds.

The facility sponsors diversity activities year-round, but without a doubt its biggest event—and one that underscores its commitment to serving disabled veterans—is the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. The 2002 gathering is planned for April 7-12 and is cosponsored by VA and the Disabled Veterans of America.

The event was conceived and developed by Chief of Recreation Therapy Sandy Trombetta, who now serves as Director of the Sports Clinic.

He originated the idea after taking one of his patients skiing at a handicapped ski program. Trombetta organized and launched the event in 1987 with nearly 90 participants. It now offers approximately 400 disabled veterans opportunities to learn and practice adaptive alpine and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, sled hockey, and other sports and educational activities.

According to Trombetta, "I've always loved sports, and I knew the veterans would love it. But I never knew how it would affect everyone else." He adds, "Tourists at ski areas are astounded. It doesn't make a difference who you are; once you see this event, you are affected by it. At the outset, we were the teachers. But now, we are the students. These vets have taught us so much about living."

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is open to all U.S. military veterans with spinal-cord injury or disease, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, or other disabilities. For information on the most recent event, visit www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc.

Diversity@Work

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COMING SOON

- * Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- * Get Your Special Emphasis Programs Up and Running
- * How to Plan a Special Observance
- * VA Leadership Speaks out on Diversity
- * Black History Month Web links
- * More tips and tools

DM&EEO ONLINE

This year, DM&EEO launched a new Web site offering tools and resources that help you promote workplace diversity and enhance the employment of minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities.

The site hosts information on the Secretary's Annual EEO Awards, special events and observances, diversity-

focused organizations,

and Special Emphasis Programs, among other useful resources for VA managers, staff, veterans, and other diversity stakeholders. The site reinforces the mission of DM&EEO to lead in creating and sustaining a workplace free of discrimination.

Visit us often; we have lots more content and tools on tap for you in upcoming months.



Find us on
the Web at
www.va.gov/dmeeo

CALENDAR

Veterans Day
November 11

**58th Annual Session of the
National Congress of
American Indians**
Spokane, WA
(202) 466-7767
November 25-30, 2001
www.ncai.org

**SHRM Workplace Diversity
Conference & Exposition**
San Diego, CA
(703) 548-3440
December 3-5, 2001
www.shrm.org/conferences

**Perspectives on Employment
of Persons with Disabilities**
Bethesda, MD
December 12-14, 2001
[http://grad.usda.gov/
conferences/DisabilitiesInfo.cfm](http://grad.usda.gov/conferences/DisabilitiesInfo.cfm)

Looking ahead to 2002:

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s
Birthday**
January 15, 2002

Black History Month
February 2002

**National Women's History
Month**
March 2002

**Asian Pacific American
Heritage Month**
May 2002

Women's Equality Day
August 2002 (TBA)

*For more upcoming events and
observances, visit our Web site
and select the Calendar link.*